

I am asking you to serve the public by ensuring in this election season that all broadcasts on public airwaves are balanced with respect to critiques of various candidates.

I have two concerns.

The first is the notorious decision by Sinclair Broadcasting to air a documentary that denigrates Senator Kerry's character. They defend the documentary as "news" but do not deny that the documentary is decidedly a condemnation of his character and thus fitness for office.

This is obviously a tactic to sway the election, and it is the duty of the government to ensure fairness in public debate. Please ensure that justice for the American people is served. I recommend either prohibiting the airing of the documentary until after the election or allow a counterpoint to be aired, such as the documentary "Going Upriver." I would expect no less treatment if, say, "Fahrenheit 9/11" was shown on public airwaves without a corresponding match of airtime given to pro-Bush concerns or some other counterpoint to the airtime given to criticism of the current Administration.

My second concern is that I have been

seeing in my local market, several days in a row now, paid advertising that runs as an "infomercial" that is critical of Senator Kerry and advising not to vote for him based on his firearms and gun-control legislation record.

This "infomercial" is sponsored and hosted by the National Rifle Association. I am not clear on all the federal regulations, but I believe that this qualifies as an election campaign commercial and that equal time should be afforded to the Kerry campaign. I do not know if this has been balanced out, but I don't think that several 30-second spots on general subjects over the course of a few days serves to fairly counter a detailed "infomercial" that runs for several minutes, albeit late at night (these aired about midnight). I think it is fair that the station should have contacted the Kerry campaign to inform them that an infomercial of several minutes would be run, and that the Kerry campaign should be able to respond in kind. I do not know if this has been done, but I would like for you to investigate this.

Sincerely,
John Clements